

Bible Study # 105
March 22, 1993
Mr. John Ogwyn

Hebrews 6 Series—Doctrine # 5: Resurrection from the Dead

This evening we **are continuing our Bible Study series of Hebrews 6—the fundamental doctrines of the Church.**

Let's note once again.

Hebrews 6:1-2, KJV, "Therefore leaving the principles [or, going on from the beginning parts] of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection [that final and seventh of the doctrines]; not laying again the foundation [there are foundational doctrines] of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."

This evening we **are dealing with the fifth of these doctrines—the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead.** The doctrine of the resurrection from the dead involves a lot of things, and it certainly ties in with the sixth doctrine, the doctrine of eternal judgment, which we will get into in the next Bible study.

The doctrine of the resurrection from the dead involves quite a bit that is different from the attitudes and approaches of the various worldly religions. One of the universal beliefs of virtually all of the various religions is the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. This shows up in various things in modern Catholicism and Protestantism. It shows up in the belief that when you die, you'll either go wafting up to heaven or go to hell. Or if you're a traditional Catholic, you can go in between to purgatory. They believe in various stages of limbo and various other things that may be a factor, but, basically, the traditional heaven/hell approach is common in western religions.

The Eastern religions tend to have other approaches, primarily centering around some form of reincarnation, as is the case in India and various other religions. But the point is that all of these religions center around the doctrine of the immortality of the soul—the idea that there is something inherent within you, which is uniquely you, that has a consciousness that is apart from the body and immortal—that you have an immortal existence.

Some religions, particularly the Eastern religions, have the idea that there's this ongoing series of reincarnations or rebirths, as they term

it. The Buddhists, Hindus and various religions hold to that sort of belief. The idea is, of course, that what you did in this life will determine what you come back as in the next life—everything from some sort of an animal to the whole caste system in India, ranging from the untouchables at the bottom all the way up to the top—and is based on the idea that you're getting repaid for the way you conducted yourself the last time around. This idea is something that just goes on and on. These ideas and attitudes permeated and were certainly characteristic of ancient Egyptian and Babylonian religion.

The archaeologists demonstrate that idea in the things they've uncovered in the various tombs. We're familiar with the funeral pyres of the ancient Greeks when their heroes were burned. The idea was to destroy the body and set the soul free. The same attitude underlines the use of cremation in many of the Eastern religions—the concept of destroying the body so the soul can be set free. The idea is, of course, that there's something inherently wrong and bad about the body; the body imprisons the soul and the soul needs to be set free from the body.

I'm getting into this a little bit because we're going to see that what God reveals in the Scriptures is totally different from what really is, in some ways, the universal lie of virtually all false religions. It goes back to the Garden of Eden when the devil spoke to Eve, as recorded in Genesis 3.

Genesis 3:1, "...And he said to the woman, 'Has God indeed said, "You shall not eat of every tree of the garden"?'"' 'What about the fruit of the trees here in the Garden, and can you eat of it?'

Verses 2-4, "And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, "You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" And the serpent said to the woman, 'You shall not surely die.'" *The very first recorded lie is the doctrine of the immortality of the soul—"You shall not surely die."*

We find that is the one belief that permeates virtually every religion. It permeated the religions of everything from the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans to Hinduism, Buddhism, even the Islamic religions, which derived there, and all of the western religions. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul even came into Judaism, primarily through their exposure to the Greek philosophers.

There are consequences. One thing to understand is that matters of doctrine like this are not merely

isolated matters. Ideas have consequences. The issue of the immortality of the soul is not an isolated issue. Ideas have consequences.

Let me give you an example. The concept that permeates so-called modern “Christianity” is the immortality of the soul and the idea that God is desperately trying to save the whole world right now—the soul-saving crusade. Many of us came out of Protestant-type backgrounds, and others came out of a Catholic background. They all accept the immortality of the soul. The concept of the soul-saving campaigns is based on the idea that because you have an immortal soul, when you die, that soul has to go somewhere. It goes up or it goes down, but it has to go somewhere because it’s immortal. Their concept is that since something has to happen to it when you die, ‘We have to get you saved right now.’

Of course, when you understand it from a biblical standpoint, you understand that when you die, you die. We’re going to see how the Bible defines the soul in a few moments. When you die, you die. The only way you will ever have life in consciousness again is through a direct act of a miracle of God to bring you forth out of the grave and restore life and consciousness to you. You will not just continue on with this life in consciousness. You don’t have that life and consciousness inherent within yourself. When you die, the only way you will ever have life and consciousness again is through a direct act of a miracle of God.

God has as His purpose the resurrection of all who died—the restoration to life—but each in his own order and each at the right time. That solves the whole dilemma because God is not desperately trying to get the world saved now. If He is, He certainly hasn’t done very well. If God and the devil have been in a great contest—the devil trying to get the world lost and God trying to get the world saved—you’d have to say that the devil has really come out ahead. If numbers count, God is hopelessly behind and He’ll never catch up. That’s an idea that makes God inadequate and the devil more powerful, and that’s not true at all!

To begin with, let’s look at what we’re told about the soul. Let’s understand what the Bible teaches about the soul—whether or not the soul is immortal. I’ve already stated that it’s not, but let’s see if we can prove that from the Scriptures. Then let’s see what the Bible teaches about a resurrection because the concept of the resurrection is a fundamental concept and something that sets things apart.

Again, in terms of the immortality of the soul, many of us in various other church backgrounds were familiar with verses that talked about the resurrection. I can remember thinking, ‘Well, if I go to heaven when I die, why would I need to be resurrected at some later time? What’s going to be resurrected? Well, they’ll resurrect my body. My soul goes to heaven; they’ll resurrect my body. Well, fine. Am I just going to be wafting around up in heaven sort of like a vapor? What is this “soul” that’s going to heaven? And when my body is resurrected, what’s that going to be? Is it going to be resurrected to where it’s going to be in pain or dependent on air, water and food? Oh, no! It’ll be a spiritual body. Well, what is it that I take to heaven with me when I die?’

See, you can’t answer that. The reason they can’t answer it is because the doctrine of the immortality of the soul comes from paganism, and the doctrine of the resurrection came from the Bible. Christianity’s attempt to wed the two produces something that’s simply incongruous—it doesn’t fit together. You can have one or you can have the other, but if you try to marry the two together, they don’t make sense. If you have an immortal soul, you don’t need a resurrection. And if the resurrection is going to be the issue, then you don’t have an immortal soul because the very fact that you need to be resurrected means that you’re dead—you’re not alive, conscious and off somewhere else. That’s why I say ideas have consequences. A lot of times people go for an idea, but they don’t consider where it leads.

I’m going to get off that part of the subject. I don’t want to spend the whole Bible study on it. But I want to give you an assignment to understand the consequences of the idea. I would suggest you go to Mr. Armstrong’s book [The Missing Dimension in Sex](#). I didn’t look up the pages, but the book has an index in the back. Look up “immortality of the soul” or look up “soul” and read those pages. You will find that the whole concept of the immortality of the soul ties in with the idea of pagan dualism and a whole code of conduct. The whole doctrine of asceticism means self-denial—that abusing or depriving the flesh is inherently better and more righteous because the flesh is inherently evil and the immortal soul is imprisoned.

The Monastic orders of the Catholic Church—the vows of poverty, chastity and humility—came from the doctrine of asceticism. By chastity, of course, they don’t simply mean the avoidance of immorality. They mean maintaining perpetual virginity (a complete

rejection of marriage), keeping yourself perpetually unmarried, which they believe is superior to being married in a right and moral way, and the very rejection of even the enjoyment of physical pleasure. They view physical pleasure as inherently wrong—even the physical pleasure that is enjoyed within the context of God’s law. That concept is the outgrowth of pagan dualism—this righteous immortal soul, this pure immortal soul is imprisoned within this flesh.

You might go back and read those pages. It’s not a really lengthy section, but Mr. Armstrong discusses the philosophy of Socrates and Plato and their teachings, in terms of the immortality of the soul and the way in which this has played a role in shaping the so-called western “Christian” world. Of course, most of the so-called early “church fathers” or early “Christian fathers,” men like Tertullian, Origen and later Augustine, were totally steeped in pagan philosophy. They were educated in the Greek philosophies. “Neoplatonism” simply means the new version of Plato’s teachings. They were filled with those things. They attempted to hold on to what they had and to somehow fit it in with Scripture, which meant having to twist and distort Scripture. This, of course, produced the so-called western “Christian” world in its many aspects.

Let’s go on back now to Genesis. When you see the word “soul” in the Old Testament, it’s translated from the Hebrew word “*nephesh*.” But the Hebrew word “*nephesh*” is not only translated “soul.” Let’s notice some places where it is translated otherwise.

Genesis 1:20, KJV, “And God said, ‘Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving [margin, “creeping”] creature [margin, “soul”] that has life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.’”

When it says the “moving creatures,” there are two terms used: one is “*sherets*,” which means “something that wiggles,” and the other is the term “*nephesh*,” which means “soul.” God said, “Let the waters bring forth the wiggling souls.” They have life. “Life” is another Hebrew word, “*taavah*.” It’s the root word from which the word “Eve” comes from. ‘Let the waters bring forth wiggling souls.’ This is talking about tadpoles, fish and all sorts of little things that are there in the waters.

Let’s continue.

Verse 30, KJV, “‘And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creeps upon the earth, wherein there is life

[margin, “living soul”], I have given every green herb for meat’: and it was so.”

Here, again, we find where it says, “wherein there is life” or the literal Hebrew is “wherein there is a living soul.” So, the “*nephesh*” is something that tadpoles have. It’s something that birds have. It’s something that everything that creeps upon the earth has. Ants have it; grasshoppers have it; and cockroaches have it. They creep upon the earth. So, whatever a “*nephesh*” is, everything from tadpoles to cockroaches, cows and birds have a “*nephesh*.”

Now, let’s come on down a little further.

Genesis 2:7, KJV, “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” The word “soul,” here, is “*nephesh*.” Man became a living “*nephesh*.” So, everything from wiggling tadpoles to great eagles soaring through the sky, little cows contentedly munching their grass, cockroaches creeping across the floor, all the way to man made in the image of God are living souls, living “*nephesh*.” So, there’s nothing inherently immortal about a soul, as the Old Testament uses the word “soul” or “*nephesh*.”

In Ezekiel 18:4 and also in Ezekiel 18:20, it makes the very clear, simple statement, “‘...the soul that sins, it shall die.’”

Ezekiel 18:4, KJV, “‘Behold, all the souls are mine; the soul of the father; so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sins, it shall die.’”

Verse 20, “The soul that sins, it shall die.” The “*nephesh*,” the soul, is not inherently immortal. Souls can die. Animals have souls; people have souls. Souls are mortal. They die.

Let’s come on back to the New Testament. In the New Testament, the Greek word translated “soul” is the word “*psuche*.” The word is commonly spelled out and pronounced in English as “psyche.” “P-s-y-c-h-e” is the English equivalent. Our word “psyche” comes from the Greek word that is translated “soul.” Anywhere you see “soul” in the New Testament, it’s the Greek word “*psuche*.”

Now, notice what we’re told.

Matthew 10:28, “‘And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell [Gehenna fire].’”

Notice what we’re told about Gehenna fire. Gehenna fire is not something that tortures soul and body forever. It is something that destroys both soul and body. There’s a distinction between soul and body, but the distinction is not that one is mortal and the other is immortal. That

is not the distinction. The “*psuche*” or the psyche is your individuality, that which is inherently you.

Sometimes people have tragic accidents and they lose a hand or an arm, a leg or both legs or maybe even both arms. Have you ceased to be yourself? No. In your mind and in your thoughts, you are still yourself. What is it that is uniquely you? The “unique you” is your personality, character, nature, mind and memory. Christ is saying, ‘Look, the most any human being can do is kill you.’ You think, ‘Oh, well that’s pretty bad.’ Well, yeah, that sounds pretty bad. A person can kill you, but God can resurrect you. God can destroy you forever, but a human being can’t destroy you forever. A human being can only destroy you until God resurrects you, but God will destroy forever in the Lake of Fire not only the body but the individuality—your existence as an individual, as a person. There’s nothing here that talks about some immortal ongoing consciousness, but rather that “*psuche*” or psyche that is there that is unique to the individual.

Come on down.

Verse 38, “‘And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.’”

Christ used this as an illustration to refer to your burden—your responsibility and duties in life. You have to take up those responsibilities and duties and follow Him. If you’re unwilling to do that, you’re unworthy of Him.

Verse 39, “‘He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.’” The word “life” here, in both cases, is the Greek word “*psuche*,” soul. ‘He that finds his soul will lose it, and he that loses his soul for My sake shall find it.’

That would shock people to think they could lose their soul for Christ’s sake. They’d think, ‘Oh no, you couldn’t lose your soul for Christ’s sake.’ When you understand what your soul is, you understand your soul is your life. What He’s saying is, ‘Look, if the primary thing in your mind is preserving your life, if you’re willing to compromise anything, if you’re willing to go to any lengths to preserve yourself, if self-preservation is the basis of your life, then you’re going to wind up losing everything. If you are willing to give up yourself—to sacrifice yourself for My sake—you’re going to find it.’ It’s the paradox that is presented.

Let’s go forward just a few more pages.

Matthew 16:25-26, “‘For whoever desires to save his life [again, the word “*psuche*”; soul— whoever will save his soul] will lose it, and

whoever loses his life [soul] for My sake will find it. For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?’” The same word translated “life” in verse 25 was translated “soul” in verse 26.

The point is that it refers to your life, to you, to your individuality and focuses on what is involved in terms of your priorities. Do our priorities focus simply on the here and now or simply on self-preservation? For a lot of people, their great priority is being comfortable, maintaining themselves, taking care of themselves and that sort of thing.

During war, many times when nations are invaded and conquered, the enemy can always find collaborators. There are always people who will sell out their fellow citizens in order to get a good deal. When the Germans overran France, there were French who were willing to collaborate and form the Vichy government. Some of you remember that back during World War II. There were collaborators. They were willing to sell out their fellow citizens because they were interested in protecting and preserving themselves. When the Germans invaded Norway or any country they invaded (I’m not just picking on them—you could look at other situations or other wars.), there was always those who placed expediency above principle, and they were willing to sell out for selfish advantage.

Of course, the problem is that when preserving yourself is your top priority, you’re jumping on and off the bandwagon trying to get onboard whoever looks like they’re going to win. Sooner or later, you’re going to jump on the side you think is winning. ‘Boy, they’re winning!’ You think, ‘This is great!’ You’re going to ride the crest of the wave, only to find out that things take a turn.

There’s only one place that you can attach yourself to and never have to worry about someone else winning. That’s God! If He comes first, you don’t have to worry about being caught in a bad spot.

John 10:11, “‘I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.’” The word “life” is “soul.”

A good shepherd gives his soul for the sheep. A hireling doesn’t; he’s just in it for the money.

Verse 15, “‘As the Father knows Me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down My life [“*psuche*”; soul] for the sheep.’”

Verse 17, “‘Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life [“*psuche*”; soul]....’” The soul is something that can be laid down. It’s

something that involves our life, and it isn't something that's inherently immortal. We're going to see that in just a minute.

The words "immortal soul" do not occur anywhere in the Bible. In fact, the very opposite occurs.

John 3:13, "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man, who is in heaven." Since John was writing this about 60 years after Jesus spoke it, he added in this parenthetical thought, 'No man has ascended to heaven, *but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in heaven.*' John added sort of a parenthetical thought because about three years after Jesus made the statement, no human being had ascended up to heaven. One Man, Jesus Christ, did ascend up to heaven. John added that in as a parenthetical thought.

What Christ said was true when He spoke it, and it is still true, with the one exception of He Himself because ***He is the only One who has been resurrected to a spiritual body.*** There has been restoration of human life, but Jesus Christ is the only One who has been resurrected with a spiritual body, which is what He does have. We're going to see that in just a few minutes as we get into the resurrections themselves.

But, again, making clear the fact that the Bible does not teach the immortality of the soul or going off to heaven, notice 1 Timothy 6.

1 Timothy 6:11-12, "But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses." Eternal life is something you have to lay hold of. He didn't say you're already in possession of eternal life, that you already have it. Eternal life is something you have to lay hold of. It's not something you possess already or is inherent within yourself.

Verses 13-16, he says, "I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate [Sovereign], the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen."

We're told that God only has immortality. God dwells in light. Where does God dwell? Well, He dwells in light. It's light that is so bright and so brilliant that no man can approach it; no human being can even look on it. God dwells there, and He only has immortality. Immortality is something He possesses. He didn't say, 'Look, all of you have immortality and it's just a matter of where you're going to be immortal.' The issue isn't a matter of where you're going to spend eternity, in the sense that you already have immortality and it's just a matter of location. The issue is a matter of duration. Are you going to last? Are you going to live or are you going to die and cease?

Let's come back to 1 Timothy 1.

1 Timothy 1:17, "Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."

God is eternal, immortal and invisible. God inhabits eternity (Isaiah 57:15). We inhabit a finite realm that is bound by the three linear dimensions of height, width, depth, plus the fourth dimension of time. Those are the finite bounds of human life. We are bound by time and by space. But God inhabits eternity; God possesses eternity. He is immortal. He's not bound by time and space in the way that we are. The Scriptures tell us that. Time doesn't mean to God what it means to us. Eternal life, immortal life, is something that God has and we don't have.

Romans 6:23, notice a familiar scripture, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." There's a contrast between life and death.

Romans 5: 9-10, "Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall [future tense] be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled [past tense] to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

We've been reconciled by His blood, and we shall be saved by His life. We're in need of being raised from the dead. In fact, simply having the penalty for our sins paid is not enough because we will die, and unless God restores us to life, we will never awaken on our own.

Job mentions that in Job 19. Some of the commentaries and a lot of critics say the Old Testament does not teach the resurrection. Well, the Old Testament does teach the resurrection and so does the New.

Job knew about the resurrection. The book of Job is perhaps the earliest book in the Bible that

was written in complete form because Job was a contemporary of, let's say, the 12 sons of Jacob. He was contemporary with them, as you put the story together. We could go through and look at some of that. Job was certainly written prior to the time of Moses. Moses may have been the one that actually included it in the canon of Scripture. Job was certainly a very early book of the Bible, and Job talks about the resurrection.

Job 19:25-27, Job says, "For I know that My Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!"

The marginal rendering of verse 26 in the King James Version is actually a little clearer.

Verse 26, KJV margin, says, "After I shall awake, though this body be destroyed, yet out of my flesh shall I see God."

Job understood the truth of the resurrection.

Job 14:1-2, he says, "Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. He comes forth like a flower and fades away; he flees like a shadow and does not continue."

Man isn't permanent.

Verse 7, he says, "For there is hope for a tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its tender shoots will not cease."

We've all experienced that. Most of us have probably cut down a tree and thought that you're rid of the thing. But the next thing you know, you have a little shoot coming up from the root. Man isn't that way. "Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He comes forth like a flower and he's cut down." His life ends. In a tree, there is a natural regeneration process that takes place where you cut down a tree and it may spring back; it may come back. People aren't that way.

Verse 10, "But man dies and is laid away; indeed he breathes his last and where is he?"

He isn't going to suddenly come back up on his own.

Verse 12, "So man lies down and does not rise. Till the heavens are no more, they will not awake nor be roused from their sleep." Job understood that.

Verse 14, he asks the question, "If a man dies, shall he live again? [Not on his own, he won't.] [Job says,] All the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes."

Verse 15, "You shall call and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands." Job understood the resurrection.

There are many places we could go to look further at the resurrection. There are allusions to it. It's true that there's not a lot of detailed teaching on the resurrection in the Old Testament, but the book of Job and the book of Daniel provide some of the clearest teaching, along with Ezekiel chapter 37 and also some in the book of Isaiah.

In Psalm 16, there's a clear prophecy of the resurrection of Christ.

Psalm 16:9-10, "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul [my "nephesh"] in Sheol ["sheol"; in the grave], nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption."

David understood that his flesh would rest in hope and that his "nephesh" would not be left in the grave. And the Holy One, the Messiah, would not even suffer corruption. You see, Jesus Christ was resurrected, not after three years, 300 years or 3,000 years after His flesh had corrupted, decayed and returned to the dust, but He was resurrected after three days and three nights. His body had not yet decayed. This is a prophecy of that. 'Nor will You allow Your Holy One, Your Messiah, to see corruption.' -A reference to the resurrection.

Let's go to Isaiah 53 where there is a detailed prophecy of Christ as the Messiah.

Isaiah 53:10, "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul ["nephesh"] an offering for sin [Jesus Christ gave His life; He gave Himself as an offering for sin], He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." He did make His soul an offering for sin. He did die, but God was going to prolong His days.

In Isaiah 56, there is an allusion to the resurrection. It addresses individuals who, under the ceremonial rituals of Deuteronomy and Leviticus, were not allowed access to the inner court of the temple. It's speaking specifically of eunuchs and also, from a ceremonial standpoint, principles that God was trying to convey. But it had nothing to do with the ultimate destiny of these individuals. Notice Isaiah 56. The resurrection isn't a new concept that just came along in the New Testament.

Isaiah 56:1-5, "Thus says the Lord: 'Keep justice, and do righteousness, for My salvation is about to come, and My righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who lays hold on it; who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and keeps his hand

from doing any evil.’ Do not let the son of the foreigner who joined himself to the Lord speak, saying, ‘The Lord has utterly separated me from His people’; nor let the eunuch say, ‘Here I am, a dry tree.’ For thus says the Lord: ‘To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, and choose what pleases Me, and hold fast My covenant, even to them I will give in My house and within My walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.’”

Verse 6 goes on and talks about the sons of the foreigner that join themselves to Him.

God alludes to an eternal life—something that goes beyond the physical. You could go to Deuteronomy 23:1 and find that eunuchs were not allowed to enter into the congregation. They were not able to participate in the temple service and neither were the sons of the foreigner. Did that cut them off from God in the true sense? No. There were ritualistic concerns, in terms of the Old Testament ceremonies, that they were not free to participate in, but real salvation and eternal life is a matter of the heart and spirit and of the relationship with God. Here’s a prophecy that to the sons of the foreigner, the eunuchs—those who really turned to God and kept God’s covenant—God would give ‘an everlasting name that would not be cut off’—eternal life.

Over in Isaiah 60:21, there is a reference to the people inheriting the land forever. Well, “forever” is not going to do you any good if you aren’t going to be around but for a few years. It’s sort of like buying something that is warranted to last 200 years. You aren’t going to be around for 200 years. Inheriting the land forever only has value if you’re going to be there forever. That’s the only way you can inherit it forever.

Isaiah 66 also makes reference to these things.

Isaiah 66:8-10, “‘Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travails, she gave birth to her children. Shall I bring to the time of birth, and not cause to delivery?’ says the Lord. ‘Shall I who cause delivery shut the womb?’ says your God. ‘Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all you who love her; ...’”

Then it talks about how God will come back to establish His government.

We find an interesting description.

Ezekiel 37:1, “The hand of the Lord came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones.”

Here Ezekiel is having this vision and in vision, he’s transported to a valley that’s full of bones.

Verses 2-7, “Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry. And He said to me, ‘Son of man, can these bones live?’ So I answered, ‘O Lord God, You know.’ Again He said to me, ‘Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, “O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord God to these bones: ‘Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.’”’ So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone.”

Can you imagine Ezekiel seeing this vision? He sees this valley just full of bones. The next thing he knows, there’s shaking and rattling. Bones start coming together with other bones, with all the shaking and the rattling going on. That must have been quite a thing to see. The next thing he knows, there’s skeletons lying all over the place. Then he looks and sinews and flesh come up. They aren’t just bones; they aren’t just skeletons. These are corpses. These are human beings, but they are dead. They are just corpses lying there. There’s no breath in them (v. 8).

Verses 9-10, “Then said He to me, ‘Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, “Thus says the Lord God: ‘Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.’”’ So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.” –A great multitude, a gigantic number of people. They were alive.

Verses 11-13, “Then he said to me, ‘Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, “Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!” Therefore prophecy and say to them, “Thus says the Lord God: ‘Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves.’”’”

Verse 14, “‘I will put My Spirit in you,’” He’ll put His Spirit in them. He begins to convert them and work with them. Here’s a prophecy of a time when ***God is going to resurrect Israel to physical life***. A physical resurrection is described

here. It's a resurrection to physical flesh and blood life.

Let's go back to the book of Daniel. There are quite a number of places in the Old Testament that talk about the resurrection.

Daniel 12:1-2, "At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince [the great archangel] who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt."

It does not differentiate when these awakenings will take place or in how many increments these awakenings will take place. It's just simply the fact that there will be awakenings, and some will awaken to everlasting life and some to shame.

Verse 3, "Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament [They'll shine like the sun, moon and stars.], and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever."

Verse 4, Daniel was told, "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."

As an aside, I think verse 4 is an interesting statement, in terms of a definition of the end-time because the 20th century is unique. In the 60 centuries of mankind's history, the 20th century has seen a revolution in transportation and information. It has seen a multiplication of knowledge in a way that is unparalleled in any other time. I know you can trace some of the transportation revolution back to the early 19th century with the steam engine, but do you realize that when the 20th century dawned, no human being had ever flown in an airplane? The vast majority of people well on into the 20th century got where they went by walking, riding an animal or riding in something that was pulled by an animal.

A lot of you remember when you plowed with a mule or you walked to where you were going. You can remember when the transportation that we take for granted was not very common. It was in this 20th century when the Wright brothers flew their first plane. Now, we can send space probes. We have the whole realm of computer technology and all of these things. I mean, "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase." Does that not refer to

this 20th century in a unique way, a descriptive way?

If Abraham had been resurrected at the beginning of the 20th century, he would have been in a world that would have certainly been different from his own, but not so drastically different that he would have been unable to cope. He would have found that when most people cooked a meal, they used a wood fire. They used a stove or some sort of thing that did that. They drew their water out of a well. They rode on an animal or they walked if they went somewhere. If they plowed a field, they hooked up an animal. Abraham would have noticed some technological changes and differences, but everything that had transpired in four millennia (40 centuries) would not have been nearly as drastic as what has transpired from the beginning of this century to our time. I think that's a remarkable thing. You really have to put it in perspective.

Anyway, that's not really what I wanted to focus on. I'm getting sidetracked here. Let's continue.

Verse 13, Daniel was told, "But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise in your inheritance at the end of the days." –A reference to the resurrection.

Come on back to the New Testament.

1 Peter 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead..." We have a living hope, and we have that through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Verses 4-5, "to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

We don't have our inheritance. It's going to be revealed in the last time. We're kept through God's power awaiting that. It is an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that doesn't fade away. The inheritance is reserved in heaven for us.

Revelation 22:12, Jesus said, "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work."

Our reward is reserved in heaven for us. We're not going to heaven to get it. Christ is coming to the earth and He brings it with Him. It's an inheritance that's incorruptible. It's undefiled. It's not going to fade away. It's being kept for us, and we're being kept by God's power awaiting a salvation that will be revealed.

John 5:28-29, “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation [or judgment] [KJV, “damnation”].” The Greek word is spelled “k-r-i-s-i-s.” They’d say “*kreesis*”; we’d say “crisis,” spelled with a “c.” I’ll get into that next Bible study when we talk about eternal judgment. But ***there’s a resurrection to life and a resurrection of judgment.***

Romans 6:4-5, it says, “Therefore we were buried with Him [with Christ] through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection...”

Baptism is a type of death, burial and resurrection. We figuratively die, are buried and come up. We’re to live in newness of life in anticipation of the time when we will literally come forth out of the graves to new life in the true sense. In the new life we live here and now, we’re still physical; we’re still mortal. We still ache and hurt, have pain and get tired. We still have to sustain our life by taking in the physical elements, but we’re living life with a new motivation, new understanding and with a new relationship with God. We’re living our life in anticipation of the time when this very life will be changed or exchanged for something else.

We find in 1 Corinthians 15 the so-called “resurrection chapter.” It very much deals with the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8, “For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas [Peter], then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep [died]. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.” God was not dealing with Paul at the same time as the others, but His dealing with Paul came along later.

He comes on down.

Verses 12-20, “Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the

dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is vain and your faith is also vain. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”

The resurrection of Jesus Christ and the resurrection of all of God’s people are inexorably tied together. You can’t separate the two. The very reality of our future hope is anchored on the truth of the resurrection. The fact that Jesus Christ not only died (poured out His life’s blood) and was buried in the grave for three days and three nights, but as Paul says right here, “He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.” Just as surely as the Scriptures were fulfilled that said He would rise again the third day, so also, the Scriptures that say we will rise at the last day will also be fulfilled. The fact that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead (and God provided many witnesses to testify to that), attest to that fact. Our hope is not predicated on an immortal soul or that we have immortality inherent within ourselves or of and by ourselves. Our hope is anchored and predicated upon the fact that the same God who raised up Jesus Christ from the dead will also raise up you and me.

Verse 20, when Christ rose from the dead, ‘He became the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.’ Death is compared to sleep.

Verses 21-24, “For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father,”

Verses 35, “But someone will say, ‘How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?’” Oh, that sounds like a good question! You see, the Greeks were really bothered with the resurrection.

Hold your place here and let’s go back to Acts.

Acts 17:22, “Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus [KJV, “Mars’ Hill”] and said, ‘Men

of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious...”

Verse 23, he talked about their altar to the unknown god.

Verses 31-32, “because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.’ And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, ‘We will hear you again on this matter.’”

The Greeks thought the resurrection—the idea that the body being restored to life—was crazy. The Greek philosophers thought the thing you wanted to do was to get rid of your body. They had this strange concept that the thing to do was get rid of the body. Here, Paul is telling them that God was going to bring the body to life again. Now, that perplexes some.

Paul addresses it.

1 Corinthians 15:35, “But some will say, ‘How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?’” ‘How is He going to do that? Why, the body is decayed and it’s turned to dust. Maybe they were blown to bits in an explosion, or maybe they died at sea and a shark ate them up. How is God going to resurrect them?’ People think they have all of these great questions. ‘How is so-and-so going to be resurrected? How could God resurrect him?’ Evidently, Paul got rather irritated. Corinth was just down the road from Athens, and these Greeks had just a little trouble with the idea of a resurrection.

Verses 36-37, Paul said, “Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—”

When corn comes up out of the ground, what did you do? Did you put the whole corn stalk down there—ear and all? No. You put one little grain. You put it in the earth. You covered up one little grain and the next thing you knew, you had a whole plant growing up. Where did God get the whole plant? Do you think it’s going to be hard for God to get the whole body out of whatever’s left? He can get the whole stalk of corn out of the ears that it has on it; he can get a whole pecan tree out of one little pecan. Do you think He’s going to have a hard time getting a body out of whatever there is?

Paul said, ‘Look, use your mind a little bit. You think God is perplexed? Do you think there is somebody He can’t figure out how to resurrect because He doesn’t have enough left of him?’

What body are you going to come up with?

Verse 38, a simple answer, “But God gives it a body as He pleases [How is so-and-so going to get resurrected, and what body is he going to have? God will give him a body that pleases God. God will give him a body as it pleases Him. Simple!], and to each seed its own body.”

Verse 40, “There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies [heavenly bodies and earthly bodies];”

Verse 41, he compares the glory of the heavenly with the glory of the earthly. There are different types of glory—different levels of brightness from the sun, moon and stars.

Verse 42, he says this is the way the resurrection is.

The point is that everybody’s going to be raised up with a body. The idea of some immortal soul—some sort of disembodied spirit wafting around—is ridiculous. The Bible doesn’t teach anything like that.

Verses 42-44, it teaches, “So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.” It’s very clear.

The fact that God is in heaven doesn’t mean we’re going to heaven. The fact of a spiritual body doesn’t mean we’re going to heaven. It means we’re going to have the kind of bodies that they have in heaven. What kind is that? – Spiritual bodies. It’s still a body, but it’s a spiritual body. It’s not a natural body. As we come on down, we’ll see the difference. We already have a contrast. The body that’s buried is weak—it’s decayed; it’s dead. It’s sown in dishonor; it’s raised in glory. The life has expired and gone out of it. It’s sown in weakness; it’s raised in power. This is a total contrast between what goes in and what comes back.

Verse 45, “And so it is written, ‘The first man Adam became a living being [a living soul].’” We read back in Genesis that the first man Adam was made a living soul. That doesn’t mean he was immortal; that means he was a living, breathing human being.

Verse 45, continuing, “...The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.”

Verses 46-49, “However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of

dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.”

The point is we have all been born as the seed of Adam—after the flesh. We’re all descended of Adam and have a body like he had—flesh and blood and mortal—the kind of body that was dependent on the breath of air that God breathed into Adam and Adam became a living soul. But that’s life that’s temporary. That’s a body that is made out of the elements of the ground and is continually dependent upon taking in of those elements to sustain it.

The life we have is not self-sustaining. It’s a temporary chemical existence based on our utilization of the oxygen out of the air and the nutrients that ultimately derive from the soil. If you eat a plant, you’re eating something that derived its nutrients from the air and the soil. If you eat an animal (if you eat flesh, meat) you’re eating a creature that derived its nutrients from plants, which in turn, derived their nutrients from the soil. We’re ultimately taking in the nutrients that come out of the ground. Our bodies have their origin with the dust of the ground, and we sustain the life that God has placed in us by taking in of those things.

We have borne the image of the earthy; we’ve been like Adam. In the resurrection, we’re going to bear the image of the heavenly. Adam was made in God’s image and after His likeness, but Adam was not made of spirit. Adam was made of flesh. “Of the earth” is such that are earthy. That’s us right now. We’ve borne the image of the earthy; we’ve been in the same category as Adam.

Verses 48-54, “As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’”

What is described is the resurrection—a restoration to life.

1 Corinthians 15 describes a spiritual resurrection—a resurrection to the same kind of life that Jesus Christ was resurrected to when He came forth out of the grave, no longer bound by time and space.

You put man in a spaceship and it takes days to get him to the moon. We haven’t been able to send people beyond that to this day. We certainly could not send one all that far because, after all, it takes years. We have satellites or space probes, but they are still within our solar system. They haven’t even gotten to the closest star.

Yet, when you read the gospel accounts, it’s very apparent that when Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene early in the morning, He told her, ‘No, don’t touch Me. I’ve not yet ascended to My Father’ (John 20:1-17). But later in the same day He allowed the disciples to embrace Him (Matthew 28:9; John 20:27)—clearly having already been to the throne of the Father in heaven and come back. He wasn’t bound by time and space.

Science says the speed of light is the fastest thing there is. No, it’s not. The speed of spirit is the fastest thing there is. That’s a whole lot faster. That’s like the speed of thought. You think and you’re there. You and I can’t do that, but Christ could. And it didn’t take Him some great, prolonged period of time to get there. When the time came to ascend to the throne of the Father, faster than you could say it, all of a sudden, there He was. And when the time came to return, there He was. It worked a whole lot better and a whole lot more rapidly than any science fiction device that man could come up with. He was resurrected and no longer bound by time and space.

Now, as a human being walking the earth, He had been bound by time and space. When He wanted to get to Jerusalem or to Samaria, He walked. He walked along the dusty road. He got thirsty and tired because He had emptied Himself and became a human being. He had made Himself of no reputation (Philippians 2:7). He had taken upon Himself the nature of the seed of Abraham, as we are told in Hebrews 2:16. He was made like His brethren (v. 17). He became a human being like us. Now, His origin was not the same as ours, but He voluntarily emptied Himself. He divested Himself. Isn’t that what we’re told in Philippians 2:7-8? Aren’t we told that Jesus Christ became flesh?

John 1:14, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,”

When He came forth out of the grave, He was no longer in the same state. The Father had restored to Him the glory that He had shared with the Father before the world was. That was what he prayed in John 17. We always read it at the Passover.

John 17:5, he said, “And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.” He underwent what He did in total faith that the Father would do that—and the Father did.

1 Corinthians 15:48-49, “...and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.” This mortal is going to put on immortality. We’re going to come forth out of the graves with a spiritual body. There is a resurrection from the dead—something that has been almost universally misunderstood by all of the religions.

Revelation 20:4-6, we will notice in closing, “And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”

Verse 12, “And I saw the dead [“the rest of the dead,” v. 5], small and great, standing before God,”

We saw a preview of their status back in Ezekiel 37. Israel was used as a type of all mankind. They were raised up, restored to a physical life, given an opportunity to understand God’s plan and purpose and to have God’s Spirit placed within them.

We’re not going to go further into that aspect of it because we’re going to save that for next time when we get into the doctrine of eternal judgment.

Hopefully, this evening, we have a little better insight into the doctrine of the resurrection and the importance of it—understanding the central focus of the resurrection in God’s plan and

God’s working and accomplishing and fulfilling His plan with mankind.

With that we’ll be concluded, and I will look forward to seeing you here on the Sabbath. Good night.